

Washington Roundup

Nixon Turnaround

Notwithstanding the instant flareup of opposition on the part of congressional "doves" to his North Vietnam port-mining announcement, **President Nixon last week moved markedly closer to their position on the Southeast Asia war.**

Key item was the presidential promise of a **four-month deadline for withdrawal of U. S. forces from Vietnam, following release of U. S. war prisoners and establishment of a cease-fire.** This is similar in concept to the perennial "Cooper-Church" and "Mansfield" amendments to end war financing, long opposed by the Administration because they set a time limit on U. S. presence in Southeast Asia.

Anti-war forces in both houses quickly recognized the turnabout and **liberalized their own planned legislation to conform with the Administration promise of a U. S. pullout in four months** rather than the doves' own six. Hearings on a funding halt for military operations in Vietnam begin this week before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, following a vote by the majority Democrats on the committee directing the move. The House resolution contains a Nov. 1 deadline on such funding.

While President Nixon was trying to keep Soviet and other ships away from North Vietnam, **the first visit by a Russian submarine armed with underwater-launched ballistic missiles was taking place in Cuba**, at the remote Nipe Bay in the northeastern part of the country. The Golf-2 class submarine carried three Serb intermediate-range missiles. There was no public U. S. protest.

Yak-40 Flight

State Dept. has granted the Soviets permission to make **three technical stops with their Yakovlev Yak-40 trijet feederliner in the U. S. in transit between Mexico City and Canada**, where demonstration flights are scheduled this month. The disassembled aircraft arrived in Colombia by ship early this year (AW&ST Jan. 10, p. 11) and has been flying in South America ever since.

Although they have been telling prospective Latin American purchasers that the Yak-40 will have an extended range of approximately 1,000 mi., **Soviet officials told the State Dept. that the Yak-40 they wish to fly to Canada has a range of barely 600 mi.** U. S. was reluctant to grant more than a single technical stop because the domestic industry wants to minimize exposure of the Soviet aircraft at this time.

Yak-40 was scheduled to land at Houston, Memphis and Cleveland, after receiving U. S. officials as onboard escorts in Mexico City.

Meanwhile, **North American Rockwell Corp. has been polling U. S. commuter airline operators as to their potential interest in the Yak-40.** The company is seeking U. S. distribution rights for the aircraft but it had not been informed by the Russians that it was about to appear in this country for the first time. Export version of the transport is now designated the Yak-40EC. The letters stand for "export Collins" and signify the origin of the aircraft's avionics package. Collins Radio is controlled by North American Rockwell.

Absent SST

One Soviet aircraft that will not appear in the U. S. for an indefinite period is the Tupolev Tu-144 supersonic transport, despite a personal plea by Transportation Secretary John A. Volpe that the Russians send it to this month's Transpo 72 at Dulles International Airport. **Sole reason for the aircraft's non-appearance at Dulles is the fact that the pre-production prototype, the only version cleared for flights outside the USSR, has a range of less than 4,000 mi.**

The aircraft has had a substantial weight growth from 330,000 lb. to nearly 400,000 lb. gross (AW&ST Mar. 8, 1971, p. 183), a factor that impacted heavily on range. Production prototype Tu-144s, two of which are now being test-flown in the Soviet Union, are expected to have improved Kuznetsov engines and a range approaching 5,000 mi., sufficient for North Atlantic service. **Landing gear on the pre-production prototype is considered structurally inadequate by Western experts**, and is being strengthened on later versions.

Short Form

New word trying to enter the space lexicon is **rendock**. Engineers studying the proposed U. S.-Soviet joint **rendezvous and docking** mission (AW&ST Feb. 7, p. 12) grew tired of repeating the phrase in its entirety and coined what they hope will become the standard, short version.

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